They Will Bring Us Back :

A story about friendship, death, and the stubborn refusal to accept either

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Part One: The Breaking

There were three of them, and they were perfect together.

Not perfect in the way that people use the word casually, but perfect in the way that prime numbers are perfect. Irreducible. Complete. Maya, Derek, and Sam had been friends since they were five years old, the kind of friendship that doesn't announce itself but simply exists, like gravity or time. They finished each other's sentences. They laughed at jokes before the punchline landed. When they fought, it was brief and forgettable, a summer storm that cleared the air.

They were fifteen when Sam died. A traffic accident while Sam and his mom were getting home had claimed both their lives.

It was sudden. It was senseless. And for Maya and Derek, it was the end of the world.

Why would something like this happen? Sam had so much to live for. They were supposed to go see that new movie this weekend, the one they'd been talking about for months. They'd made a pact in middle school to live in the same neighborhood as adults, to have kids who'd be best friends just like they were. Sam's mom was the nicest person Maya and Derek had ever met. She baked cookies for the whole class on birthdays, asked about their lives like she actually cared, remembered the names of their pets. She didn't deserve this. They didn't deserve this. How could their friend just disappear like that, be there one day and gone the next, like someone had erased him from the world? Every day after the funeral felt wrong, like wearing shoes on the wrong feet.

It was now three weeks since Sam died, Maya and Derek didn't cry as much as they sat in silence, staring at nothing. It’s like life had taken on this new filter that made everything good, bad and everything bad, worse.

One evening, they met in Derek's garage, where the three of them used to build things, stupid things, brilliant things, half-finished projects that littered every surface. Sam's last invention, a Rube Goldberg machine made from kitchen utensils and bike parts, still sat in the corner, frozen mid-creation.

"What's the point?" Maya said. It wasn't really a question.

Derek didn't answer at first. Then: "Of what?"

"Any of it. Life. If we're all just going to die anyway."

They sat with that for a while. The garage smelled like motor oil and old wood. Outside, the world continued like nothing had happened, which felt obscene.

"Maybe there isn't one," Derek said finally. "A point, I mean."

Maya was quiet for a long moment. When she spoke, her voice was raw. "It looks that way, doesn't it? Everything we have can go in an instant. Every good memory we've ever had, just gone. Erased." She looked at the Rube Goldberg machine in the corner. "If there even is

anything after. There might be nothing."

She couldn't accept it. Life couldn't just be a bunch of happiness, then sadness, then it all ends. That wasn't good enough. Derek had said there might not be a point, and maybe he was right, but that didn't mean they had to accept it.

"Then we make one." Maya stood up suddenly, animated for the first time in weeks. "We decide what matters."

They spent the next month arguing about it the way they used to argue about everything: intensely, completely, with the kind of focus that made teachers think they weren't paying attention when really they were paying attention to something else entirely.

They landed on two rules and concluded that if life had a meaning, surely it was to:

1. Live as long as possible.
2. Be as happy as possible while doing it.

Simple. Obvious. Except for the part where rule one was currently impossible.

"So we make it possible," Derek said.

Maya nodded. "We make it possible."

They had always been stubborn. The kind of kids who, when told they couldn't go to the skate park on a school night, would finish every piece of homework and every chore just to prove the point. They didn't accept the world as it was. They bent it.

And without knowing it, this realization would push them so far that they would devote their lives to bending it out of existence. The two had subconsciously decided that ending death would be the ultimate use of their time. Creating a world where no one has to say goodbye to anyone they love and feel the pain they felt.

Death had taken their friend. Now death was the enemy.

Part Two: The Paths Diverge

They threw themselves into it the way obsessed people do.

They read everything. Science fiction that treated death like a solvable problem, futurist manifestos, cryo-preservation papers, physics journals that made their heads hurt. They attended conferences on anti-aging and regenerative medicine, often the youngest people in rooms full of scientists discussing their latest breakthroughs. They even took seriously the fringe theorists who claimed they were building a time machine that could send tiny quantities of matter back into the past.

This search for answers lasted a year. In the end, they chose biology and physics as the tools they would use to end death forever.

Maya went into biotech. Keep the living alive, she reasoned. Regenerative medicine, cellular repair, synthetic organs, cryonics, gene therapy. Anything and everything that could pause the clock or turn it backward was a shot worth taking.

Derek chose physics. Biotechnology had limits, he argued. Biology was messy, contingent, prone to failure. But physics was fundamental. If you could write equations that perfectly described the universe from the Big Bang forward, you could plug them into an advanced computer and simulate everything that ever happened. Every particle, every interaction, every neuron that ever existed. You could reconstruct every thought, every person, every moment.

You could bring back the dead.

Not copies. Not approximations. The actual people. In fact, if you could use the advanced computer to track the atoms the person was made of at the time of their death, you could go scavenging the entire planet, collect them all, and literally reassemble the exact person molecule by molecule.

These two would go on to become scientists exploring these fields and those adjacent.

Thirty years passed.

Derek and Maya were both professors now, at Stanford and Berkeley respectively. Maya had started a lab focused on aging science. She was brilliant and relentless. People called her driven. They meant obsessed. Derek was a workaholic who spent most of his days in his lab with students, working on the world's most advanced quantum computing hardware.

They were both chasing the same goal from different directions.

They stayed friends. They stayed focused. And when Maya called Derek on a Tuesday afternoon, her voice shaking, he knew immediately what it was.

"I'm sick," she said. "The one thing we can't fix yet."

"How long?"

"Months. Maybe a year."

Derek was on a plane that night. They spent Maya's last months together, working, talking, and remembering. She died in the spring. And suddenly, all that was left was Derek.

Part Three: The Equation

Another thirty years went by with Derek still going at it. He was eighty-six now but looked like he was still in his late twenties, kept youthful and healthy by many of the scientific breakthroughs Maya had pioneered.

If only she had made it five more years. Then she would have gotten that new 3D-printed organ technology and not have died. If only.

Regardless of the loss, Derek kept pushing. Still working, still stubborn. By now, because of the realization of AGI, technological progress happened in weeks, not years or months or quarters. He could feel he was very close to a breakthrough.

His current universal computer could simulate the universe with 85% accuracy. He wanted 100.

His lab had grown into something unrecognizable. Quantum computers the size of buildings, simulations running in parallel across dimensions of processing power that would have seemed like magic to his younger self. He was old now in ways that had nothing to do with his body. Old in memory, in loss, in the weight of almost a century.

He'd almost given up a dozen times. A hundred times.

Then a graduate student named Chen, young and brilliant and completely unaware of the history behind the work, ran a calculation.

"Professor?" Chen's voice was strange. "You should see this."

Derek walked over, his pace unhurried. He'd seen a thousand promising results collapse under scrutiny.

The screen showed an equation. Elegant, complete, predictive. Chen had run it backward and forward across test cases. It described the universe with perfect fidelity.

"It works," Chen whispered. "It actually works."

Derek's hands were shaking. He'd forgotten they still could. A problem that Einstein and Hawking had failed to solve. Solved on a random afternoon by an early career researcher and a computer with the computational density of a star.

They built the simulation carefully, feeding it every scrap of astronomical data, every measurement, every observation. They ran it forward from the Big Bang. Galaxies formed. Stars ignited. Planets coalesced. Life began.

And on one particular planet, in one particular galaxy, two children named Maya and Sam were born.

Derek didn't watch their whole lives. He couldn't bear it. He skipped forward to the data he needed: the molecular composition of both his friends at the moment of their deaths. Every

atom, every position, every quantum state.

Then he did something that would have been called impossible three decades ago. He tracked those atoms forward through time. Some were in the ocean. Some were in orbit, incorporated into satellites. Some were in toys, in trees, in the air. He gathered them and loaded all the atoms into containers the size of washing machines. It took years, but he did it.

He had the exact atoms his friends were made of. He had nanoassemblers and the 3D file on how to assemble their bodies and memories intact.

The day he pressed the button, he was alone in the lab. The machines hummed. A single atom of carbon became two, then three, then nitrogen was added, then those became amino acids, amino acids became proteins, proteins became cells, cells became memories, skin, organs.

And in about a minute, they were there.

Maya and Sam, exactly as they'd been, blinking in confusion, looking around at a room full of technology they couldn't begin to comprehend.

"Derek?" Maya said. "What..."

He told them everything. All of it. The decades, the work, the breakthrough. Sam's death and Maya's death and the century that Derek had spent refusing to accept either.

They cried. All three of them. In a garage-sized laboratory filled with equipment worth more than continents, three friends who had been separated by death and time held each other and cried.

"We did it," Maya said finally, laughing through tears. "We actually did it."

"We're not done," Derek said. "There are a hundred billion more."

"Everyone?" Sam asked.

"Everyone."

So they started bringing them back. All of them. Every human who had ever lived and died. They built the simulations first, perfect digital resurrections. Then, for those who wanted it, physical bodies assembled from their original atoms, tracked and gathered across the cosmos.

Family reunions across millennia. Conversations impossible by death, made possible by stubbornness. The dead returning not to a world they knew, but to something stranger and more wonderful than any afterlife ever imagined.

Three friends, united again, watching humanity wake up.

"You know what's funny?" Sam said one day, sitting in a recreation of Derek's old garage, surrounded by all the people they'd lost and found again.

"What?" Maya asked.

"We were right. About the two rules."

Derek smiled. "We usually are."

"Stubborn," Maya said.

"Always," they said together.

And somewhere in the vast machinery that made resurrection possible, in the quantum foam of reality itself, the universe acknowledged what anyone who'd known them could have told it from the start:

You don't tell these three no. They simply won't accept it.

A Message to the Future

If you're reading this and you're far enough along, maybe you can help us.

We're writing this in 2025. We don't know if biotechnology will advance fast enough to save everyone alive today. We don't know if we'll make it to the age of resurrection, or if we'll die too soon, before the breakthrough comes.

But if you're reading this centuries from now, if you've figured out the physics, if you've built the simulations and gathered the atoms and made the impossible possible, then maybe you could bring us back too. All of us. The ones who died too early. The ones who had the dream but not the time.

We understand this might seem strange. Maybe even unethical by your standards, bringing back people from a primitive era who might not fit into whatever glorious future you've built. Maybe you have your own rules about resurrection, your own careful philosophies about who deserves to return.

But consider this: we're the ones who pointed the way. Who refused to accept death as final. Who spent our lives working toward the very technology you now possess. Don't we deserve to see it? To experience the world we tried to build?

And if not us, then what about the children? The ones who died before they had a chance to live? The ones taken by accident, by disease, by the simple cruel randomness of existence in an era before we'd fixed these problems?

What about the ones who would have helped you build your world, if only they'd had more time?

We're not asking for special treatment. Just inclusion. A chance to wake up in the future we tried to create. To see our friends again. To finish the projects we started. To live in a world where death is no longer the final word, where goodbye is temporary, where nothing good is lost forever.

If you can do this, if the technology exists and the will can be found, please consider bringing us back.

We promise we'll be worth the effort.

Written in hope by those who refuse to accept the inevitable

Waiting patiently in whatever substrate the dead inhabit

Until someone stubborn enough comes along to wake us up

The End.